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DEEPLY BIASED: INDIA SLAMS U.S. REPORT ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the report cherry-picked incidents to push a preconceived narrative against India

DRIVEN BY VOTEBANK CONSIDERATIONS: MEA

"As in the past, the report is deeply biased, lacks an understanding of India's social fabric and is visibly driven by votebank considerations and a prescriptive outlook," Jaiswal said. "We therefore reject it. The exercise itself is a mix of imputations, misrepresentations, selective usage of facts, reliance on biased sources and a one-sided projection of issues," he added

'QUESTIONS INTEGRITY OF JUDICIAL VERDICTS'

- While releasing the report in Washington on Wednesday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken had flagged a 'concerning increase' in anti-conversion laws, hate speech, and demolition of homes and places of worship in India
- The MEA spokesperson said the US State Department's annual report appears to challenge the integrity of certain judgments by Indian courts

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CHURCHES WERE BURNED DOWN IN MANIPUR IN 2023, SAYS THE U.S. REPORT

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Record rain in 88yrs maroons Delhi

JITENDRA CHOUBEY @ New Delhi

AFTER record heat, it poured like there was no tomorrow on the first day of monsoon in the national capital, drenching Delhi with the highest one-day rainfall in 88 years. It rained cats and dogs from about 4 am to 8.30 am and left major parts of Delhi and the adjoining national capital region flooded.

Water entered homes, submerging vehicles and leading to massive traffic snarls that took hours to detangle. Thousands of commuters found themselves stranded.

The Safdarjung Automatic Weather Station recorded a whopping 228.1 mm rainfall in 24 hours, the second highest since 1936 when the precipitation was 235 mm. The total rainfall recorded in June so far is 234.5 mm as against the normal of 74.1 mm. Friday's downpour was more than one-third of the total normal monsoon rainfall from June to September at Safdarjung, which is around 640 mm.

"Following a hot weather streak, the region got 148.5 mm, almost the double of June's normal rain, in just 3 hours, and nearly the entire August rain in about 6 hours!" said Akshay Deoras, UK-based scientist at the National Centre for Atmospheric Science and Department of Meteorology, University of Reading.

Explaining how global warming-induced climate change causes heavy downpours in a short span, he said, "The soil becomes dry and hard following a streak of hot weather. If rain falls in large amounts in a short span, the soil can repel water, increasing the risk of a flash flood. Unfortunately, such events are expected to become more frequent due to global warming."

HIGHEST DAILY RAINFALL AT SAFDARJUNG OBSERVATORY

RANK	RAINFALL (IN MM)	DATE
1	235.5	24.06.1936
2	228.1	28.06.2024
3	191.6	30.06.1981
4	139.7	24.06.1933

MONTHLY AVERAGE RAINFALL FOR SAFDARJUNG (JUNE-SEPT) IN MM

June	74.1	August	233.1
July	209.7	September	123.4

A collapsed canopy at Terminal 1 of Indira Gandhi International Airport crushes parked cars, following heavy rain and wind, in New Delhi on Friday | PTI

CABBIE KILLED IN CANOPY COLLAPSE

UJWAL JALALI @ New Delhi: One cabbie died while six others sustained injuries after a portion of the canopy at the Delhi Airport's Terminal-I collapsed amid heavy pre-dawn rains on Friday. Deputy Commissioner of Police (IGI-A) Usha Rangnani said the shed outside Terminal 1 of the domestic airport, from Departure Gate 1 to Gate 2, collapsed around 5 am with its beams crashing on parked cabs. The deceased was identified as Ramesh Kumar (45). Iron beams from the roof crashed on his parked cab with him inside. The injured were rushed to Medanta Hospital from where they were shifted to Safdarjung Hospital. "Around four vehicles were damaged and six persons were injured. All the injured persons are stable," Rangnani said. The Delhi Police later registered a case of death due to negligence under the Indian Penal Code. New Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu took stock of the situation. His ministry ordered a probe into the incident, and directed the airport operator to do a thorough inspection. The rains disrupted flight services for a few hours.

Repeated disruptions force both Houses to be adjourned without conducting business

OPPN STALLS PARL TO MAKE NEET POINT

PREETHA NAIR & RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

BOTH Houses of Parliament witnessed dramatic scenes and multiple adjournments on Friday with Opposition parties led by the Congress pressing for a debate on alleged irregularities in the NEET-UG exam. In the Lok Sabha, Opposition members sought suspension of all other matters to discuss the NEET fiasco but Speaker Om Birla ruled that a discussion on the President's address be taken first.

In the Lok Sabha, Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi demanded a 'respectful' discussion on the NEET issue to show solidarity with the students. "We wanted to give a joint message to the students of India, on behalf of the Opposition and government, that we consider this an important issue. So, we thought that to respect students we will have a discussion on NEET today, a dedicated discussion," he said.

The Opposition benches erupted in uproar when Rahul Gandhi claimed his microphone was switched off. In response, Birla said he had no control over microphones. "The discussion should be on the President's address. Other matters will not be recorded," the Speaker said.

Noisy scenes unfolded in the Rajya Sabha as well. At one point, Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge too entered the Well of the House to join the protest. This triggered a sharp comment from Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar, who said it is for the first time that a person occupying the post has engaged in such a conduct.

In the Upper House, the disruptions were marked by intense sloganeering, leading to the suspension of proceedings three times. The third adjournment came after DMK member Tiruchi Siva informed the House that Congress member Phulo Devi Netam had fainted.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju slammed the Congress for disrupting parliamentary proceedings.

Now, Lingayat seer wants CM post for leaders of community

NAUSHAD BIJAPUR @ Belagavi

THE issue surrounding a possible change of guard in the state continues to gain momentum. Religious leaders and politicos from the dominant communities are continuing to exert pressure on the ruling Congress, seeking that the top posts in government be bestowed upon leaders from among their ranks.

While on Thursday, Chandrashekhar Swami of Vishwa Vokkaliga Mahasamsthana Math appealed to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to make way for DK Shivakumar to become the CM, on Friday, a well-known seer of the Lingayat community, Dr Channasiddarama Panditaradhya Shivacharya of Chikkodi, stated that the Congress high command should give the CM post to a minister from the Veerashaiva Lingayat community, if the party is contemplating a change of guard.

"If the government is thinking about a change of guard in the state, it should give the CM's post to a Veerashaiva Lingayat minister," Dr Channasiddarama reiterated.

CONTINUED ON: P4

TT rams parked lorry near Haveri, claims 13 lives

KIRAN BALANNANAVAR @ Haveri

THIRTEEN people died on the spot and four others were injured after their Tempo Traveller rammed a parked lorry on NH-48, near Haveri. The predawn accident happened at Gundenahalli cross, close to Byadagi town.

Police said the driver of the Tempo Traveller (KA-01-AB-4760) rammed his vehicle into the lorry (KA-51-D-3530) parked along the highway. Passersby called the 112 team and soon a medical team reached the spot.

The deceased were identified as driver Adarsh (25), Arunkumar (32), Nageshwar Rao (52), Bhagya Bai (45), Vishalakshi (49), Subhadra Bai (60), Anjali (29), Manjula Bai (60), Manasa (20), Roopa Bai (30), Manjula (54), Arya (3) and Nandan (5). The injured are Annapoorna (52), Arpita (17), Parshuram (48) and Goutam (12). The deceased were from Emmihatti village of Bhadravati taluk in Shivamogga district. The lorry driver and cleaner were arrested.

Relatives and police from Holehonnur arrived at Haveri government hospital, where the four injured passengers were being treated.

CONTINUED ON: P5

The wreckage of the Tempo Traveller, after it rammed a parked lorry on NH-48 near Haveri on Friday | EXPRESS

> Two of the injured have been admitted to the ICU and their condition is serious. The driver and cleaner of the lorry were arrested
>
> Anshu Kumar, Superintendent of Police, Haveri district

Soren out of prison on bail after 5 months

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

AFTER spending nearly five months behind bars, former Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren on Friday walked out jail after the Jharkhand High Court granted him regular bail in a money laundering case linked to a land scam.

The court said there is no reason to believe he is guilty of the charges. After hearing both sides on June 13, a bench of Justice Rongon Mukhopadhyay had kept its order reserved, which was pronounced on Friday.

"The overall conspectus of the case based on broad probabilities does not specifically or indirectly assign the petitioner to be involved in the acquisition and possession as well as concealment of 8.86 acres of land at Shanti Nagar, Baragain, Ranchi connected to the 'proceeds of crime'. None of the registers/revenue records bare imprint of the direct involvement of the petitioner in the acquisition and possession of the said land," the order said.

Soren was arrested by ED on January 31 in connection with the case. After his interim bail plea was rejected and subsequent withdrawal of his petition from the Supreme Court, Soren had moved to Jharkhand High Court seeking a regular bail for him. After stepping out of the prison around 4 pm on Friday, the JMM leader alleged that he was a victim of a conspiracy.

Hemant Soren addresses media after his release from jail | PTI

Bridge-tone: It's all blue for now

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN @ Chennai

A World Cup final in the last week of June? If Indian fans are looking for some signs from up above, this one is right there, staring you in the face, front and centre. June 25, 1983, was when India won it for the first time (in one dayers), slaying the two-time and defending champions, West Indies. Forty-one years and a few days later, they have the opportunity to end a decade-old drought for global gold.

Rohit Sharma

They came close to ending it in the longer formats last year but lost on both occasions to familiar foes, Australia. Standing between them and a second T20 World Cup title (fifth if you want to include the OG version) is South Africa, whose men's team are in unchartered territory. Man for man, the Indian team come out on top, especially in Caribbean conditions where the strips have been low, slow with some grip.

But the final in Bridgetown, Barbados, promises to be close for a variety of reasons. There are multiple similarities (a top-order with an out of form opener, one batter who will look to break open the powerplay, one left-arm wrist-spinner, one future Hall of Famer seamer, one decent left-arm pacer...) but the biggest factor is that the South African batters match up well to the Indian spinners.

Zooming out, they are both units so driven by the idea of success for different reasons. For India, with multiple generational talents in various points of their career, they want to add a title to further embellish their body of work and to repay the faith their employers have in them. Individual records are great but the primary currency in sport is finishing first in big tournaments. India have let themselves down in this regard.

For the Proteas, it's to show the cricketing world this is the beginning of a new dawn, free of the baggage most of their teams have had since readmission.

Live on Star Sports/Hotstar from 8 PM

VIKRAM MISRI
NEW FOREIGN SECRETARY

Dy National Security Adviser Vikram Misri, a renowned expert on China, will succeed incumbent Vinay Kwatra on July 15 | P9